

# Texans Want Texas to Be Smoke-Free

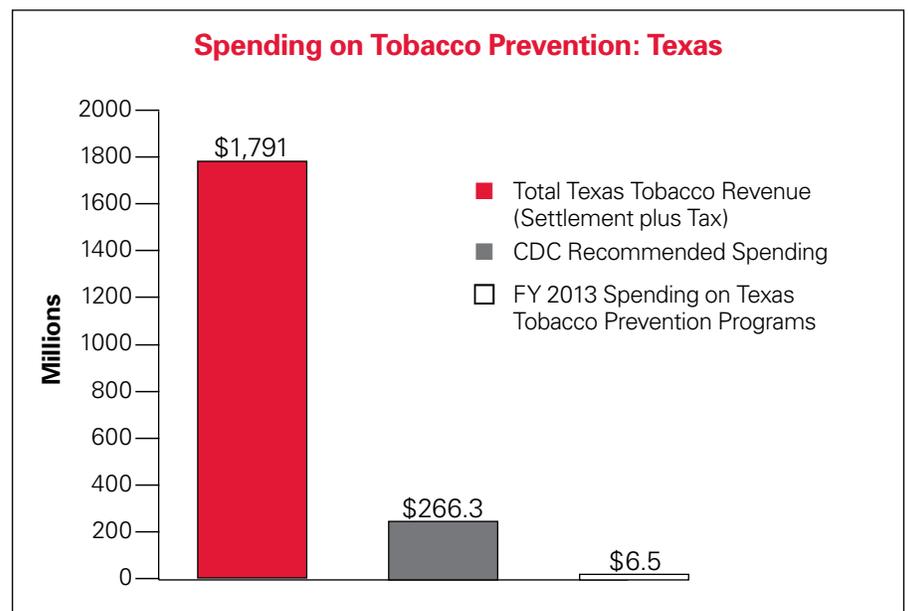
Texas is the largest state in the United States without a 100-percent smoke-free air law. While workers in 30 states are protected by statewide smoke-free legislation, more than half of Texans do not have the same protection. Dozens of Texas cities have taken the lead in protecting workers and changing the social norm that allows employees to be exposed to secondhand smoke in their workplace. The state must take steps now to embrace coordinated, comprehensive approaches to reduce smoking and exposure to secondhand smoke. We can save lives by reducing the use of tobacco and secondhand smoke exposure, preventing the promotion of new tobacco products, and supporting those who want to quit their addiction.

## 2013 SMOKE-FREE PRIORITIES

- ✓ Support comprehensive statewide smoke-free legislation that eliminates exposure to secondhand smoke in all indoor workplaces in Texas.
- ✓ Support evidence-based programs to discourage tobacco consumption among the public, especially youth, and to increase tobacco cessation.
- ✓ Oppose tobacco settlement fund securitization and repurposing of funds for anything other than smoking cessation and evidence-based prevention programs.
- ✓ Support the Texas Department of State Health Services' budget request for the operation of the state Quitline to cover all Texans who want to quit smoking.
- ✓ Oppose efforts to encourage the use of smokeless tobacco and other tobacco products as less harmful products.

## TOBACCO IN TEXAS: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- All of us pay a hefty price for tobacco use with direct medical expenses of smoking, loss of workplace productivity, and premature death costing more than \$20 billion each year in Texas. Even though cigarette smokers pay an average price of \$5.52 for a pack, the actual cost to the Texas economy is \$21 per pack.
- Tobacco is the leading cause of preventable death in Texas with more than 24,500 deaths a year linked to smoking. Smokeless tobacco is no less harmful, containing even higher concentrations of carcinogens than cigarettes.
- Texas continues to lag behind other states in supporting effective tobacco prevention and cessation programs, ranking 41st in the nation in 2013.<sup>1</sup> Yet Texas' revenue in 2012 will reach almost \$2 billion from tobacco taxes, fees, and settlement funds. We must ensure that more of these funds pay for proven tobacco-related programs, and that we do not lose future tobacco settlement dollars through securitization (forfeiting future payments for a smaller, up-front lump sum.)
- Seventy percent of Texans<sup>2</sup> support a statewide ban on smoking. More than 24 Texas municipalities are acting to protect workers and others at risk by adopting local smoke-free ordinances. Study after study has shown that smoking bans have positive or no impact on businesses.
- Texas has almost 3 million tobacco users, and 90 percent of them started using tobacco as a teen. Each year up to half will try to quit and will need adequate support.



1. FY2012 Rankings of Funding for State Tobacco Prevention Programs, Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids.

2. Baseline and Associates, Survey of Texas Voters. Position on Smoke-Free Law. 2011.